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150430-01 - Bureau of Land Management News Release

For additional information, contact Larry Crutchfield, 435-691-4310

Round Two Focus Groups for Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Recreation Study during Amazing Earthfest

By Allysia Angus

KANAB, Utah – The public is invited to join a conversation about recreation management on BLM public lands. The areas to be discussed include public lands accessed by HWY 89 between Kanab and Page as well as landscapes in Paria Canyon and Vermilion Cliffs. The second of three rounds of local area focus groups will be hosted by Colorado Mesa University's Natural Resource Center (NRC), Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and the Kanab Field Office. The focus groups are scheduled for May 14 through May 16 in Kanab and Big Water.

These sessions are the third phase of the Recreation Experience Baseline Study being conducted by CMU to help BLM better respond to the public's desires and expectations for how recreation is managed on public lands in this region. The first phase of the project was conducted in 2013 and studied the western Escalante Canyons region; while the second phase, conducted in 2014, focused on the Grand Staircase region.

This research seeks to engage local leaders, business owners, residents, and visitors that either participate in recreational activities in this region, or have a stake in the quality of the experience of those that do. A focus group is a form of research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, preferences, and attitudes towards, in this case, recreational use on public lands in this region. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members.

The idea behind the focus groups is to open dialogue between BLM land managers and the public on recreation issues, to provide information for future planning efforts and project assessments, and to gather data needed to better understand the public's desired outcomes for recreation management in the Monument.

The focus groups will be facilitated by Dr. Tim Casey, Professor of Political Science at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, Colorado. Dr. Casey is a lead researcher and director of the NRC who has extensive experience working with BLM on similar social science projects on the Colorado Plateau. He has been responsible for facilitation of public meetings and focus groups regarding public lands since 2006.

Each focus group session will last approximately 90 minutes. The dates, times, and locations are noted below:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
THURS May 14	7 PM	GSENM Kanab Visitor Center 745 HWY 89 East, Kanab, UT
FRI May 15	10 AM	GSENM Big Water Visitor Center 20 Revolution Way, Big Water, UT
FRI May 15	3 PM	GSENM Kanab Visitor Center 745 HWY 89 East, Kanab, UT
SAT May 16	10 AM	GSENM Kanab Visitor Center 745 HWY 89 East, Kanab, UT

Those not available to participate in these sessions will have other opportunities to have their voices heard. Another round of focus groups is scheduled in the local area in October to coincide with the Big Water Dinosaur Festival. Additionally, live web-based sessions will also be utilized as part of the study. In these sessions, participants from far and wide can join the conversation from the comfort of their homes using a phone and computer. The dates for the web-based sessions are slated for July 30, August 4, and August 6.

This third phase of the Recreation Experience Baseline Study has been funded by a National Landscape Conservation System Science Grant and Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act fees. If funding allows, additional BLM public lands in the region will be studied in subsequent years.

For more information about how to participate in this project, please contact Allysia Angus, GSENM Landscape Architect at 435-826-5615 or aangus@blm.gov. Or if you have questions about the research, please contact Dr. Tim Casey at 970-248-1095 or tcasey@coloradomesa.edu.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In fiscal year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.

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